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1. Introduction

The Opportunity

The Near Southeast is at an important moment in its history. For the majority of the last century, this area that sits along the banks of the Anacostia River and on the doorstep to the US Capitol has been dominated by large industrial and government uses. In the last decade, however, the expansion of the office market, the redevelopment of the Washington Navy Yard, the increased demand for housing in the District and the Mayor's focus on the Anacostia River have led to significant public and private investments in infrastructure and urban development in the Near Southeast. As recent public and private investments reach nearly two billion dollars in the Near Southeast, the neighborhood is on the verge of a major transformation.

However, investment alone cannot transform what has long been an isolated and disconnected place into a dense, mixed-use, waterfront neighborhood. In order for the Near Southeast to undergo significant and lasting positive change, this period of dynamic activity must be guided by a comprehensive vision. The District of Columbia has the opportunity to harness the incredible momentum in the Near Southeast and provide the necessary direction that will ensure that the area reaches its potential in becoming one of the city's most integrated waterfront neighborhoods.

This report gives the District and Near Southeast stakeholders a comprehensive framework to guide the transformation. The principles that underlie the Urban Design Framework were created to inform the myriad of decisions that will be required of the District in the years to come as the Near Southeast continues to develop. These principles are the building blocks of the vision for the Near Southeast, which includes the cohesive development of mixed-income housing, offices, retail uses and cultural destinations, and a network of streets, parks, trails, and esplanades that will help to create a pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented neighborhood and reestablish historic Carrollsburg.

Background

The period of substantial change and heightened public and private investment in the Near Southeast began in the 1990s. Over the last five years, the Navy Yard increased on-site employment to 10,800 persons and private developers have constructed multiple new office buildings on M Street to house businesses related to the Navy Yard. The District recently secured federal HOPE VI funds to contribute to the planning and construction of the Capper-Carrollsbury residential development north of M Street, which will add mixed-income housing to the Near Southeast for the first time in over 50 years. In 2002, the GSA began the bidding process for private redevelopment of the 55-acre Southeast Federal Center (SEFC). The Office of Planning recently rezoned Buzzards Point, allowing commercial and residential uses in this underutilized industrial area for the first time since the 19th Century.

District of Columbia Office of Planning

The DC Office of Planning (DCOP) has been selected as the coordinating agency of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative planning process, which includes over 15 federal and local agencies. Significant stakeholder agencies in the Carrollsburg target area include the US Navy, the US General Services Administration, the DC Housing Authority, the DC Water and Sewer Authority and the DC Department of Transportation. The planning process in the Near Southeast includes both the coordination of agency actions and the District's preparation for a number of significant zoning revisions. In this capacity, the Office of Planning has been able to mediate between citizen stakeholders, federal actions and private development projects in an effort to recapture the Anacostia waterfront as a central element in our City.

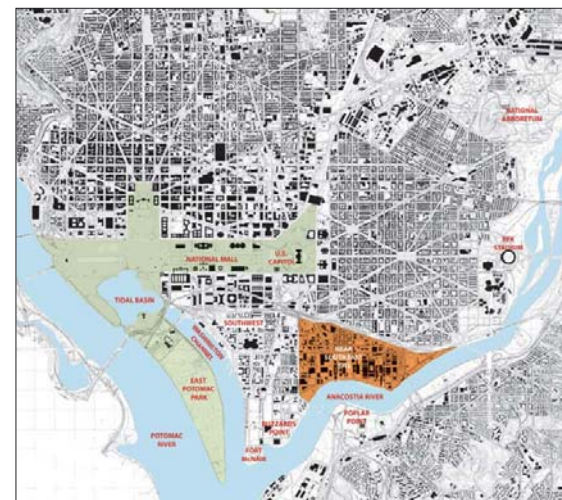


FIGURE 1.1
Location map



FIGURE 1.2
Aerial View of the Near Southeast



Near Southeast Planning Principles

1. Extend Existing Streets to the River

Introduce unobstructed public access to the waterfront by extending the existing street grid network and the associated view corridors to the Anacostia River. Create neighborhood connections to Capitol Hill and the Southwest in order to overcome the physical and psychological barriers of the elevated highway and South Capitol Street.

2. Transform M Street into a Vibrant Mixed-Use Corridor

Create a true urban boulevard at the center of a dense neighborhood by encouraging a mix of uses including residential, introducing ground floor retail, creating an attractive streetscape and promoting public transit ridership and pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

3. Dramatically Increase Housing Opportunities

Introduce a higher density of housing in order to develop a vibrant mixed-use waterfront neighborhood that provides a variety of housing opportunities and promotes diversity of income levels, in the pursuit of a strong, balanced, family-oriented community.

4. Introduce a Mixture of Uses at the Waterfront

Establish a mix of uses along the waterfront, avoiding isolated stretches and providing places of interest to the general public. Include active uses that take advantage of the extraordinary public resource of the Anacostia River.

5. Create a Great Waterfront Park at SEFC

Create a significant water-oriented public open space at the Anacostia River waterfront that serves as an attraction for residents, employees and visitors to the Near Southeast neighborhood and the Nation's Capital.

6. Create an Interconnected System of Parks and Trails

Create linkages within the neighborhood, to the waterfront and to surrounding communities by introducing trails, parks, greenways and pedestrian-scaled streets. Ensure continuous public access along the Anacostia River by building the Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail system.

7. Build on the Unique History of the Carrollsbury Neighborhood

Create a neighborhood identity which celebrates the unique history of the Near Southeast. Seek to integrate cultural resources into new developments, and explore all opportunities to restore connections to the history of the Anacostia River.



FIGURE 1.3

View of Proposed Waterfront Park

Rendering by Michael McCann

Early on, key principles were agreed upon to build on and guide the extraordinary momentum in the Near Southeast. These principles take advantage of the opportunity created by the public and private sector initiatives currently underway in the Near Southeast, including the Southeast Federal Center redevelopment, the Copper-Carrollsbury Hope VI residential project, the Maritime Plaza development, the proposed development at the Florida Rock Site, and many others. The purpose of the urban design principles is to capture the energy of individual development efforts, linking them through a system of broader goals that fosters the creation of a vibrant, diverse, mixed-use and mixed-income waterfront neighborhood.

Building on and providing direction for these opportunities for positive change, the planning principles outline the key factors that will allow the Near Southeast to reconnect to the river, grow as a vibrant mixed-use area, substantially increase mixed-income housing opportunities, enhance and create great public spaces, connect Near Southeast neighborhoods with pedestrian-friendly streets and trails, and celebrate the unique history of the Carrollsbury neighborhood.

Together, these principles form the backbone of the Near Southeast Urban Design Framework.



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Urban Design Framework

The Near Southeast Urban Design Framework proposes a comprehensive vision for the area bounded by the Anacostia River, South Capitol Street and the I-395 corridor. The intention of the Urban Design Framework is to provide a guiding vision for the initiatives by the public and private sectors in the Southeast so that when woven together through public policy and targeted actions they produce a vibrant new waterfront neighborhood.

Responding to a new set of challenges and opportunities, the Framework proposes a rebuilding of the historic Carrollsburg neighborhood. The Framework creates new and improved elements of the public realm like the extension of New Jersey Avenue, the Canal Blocks Park, the revitalization of M Street, and the Virginia Avenue Greenway. It identifies the opportunities to frame and support these spaces and places with new buildings, uses and activities. As the Framework recommendations are implemented, a vital new neighborhood on the waterfront will come into being, creating a great public amenity for new and existing residents and employees, but also playing a key role in the larger objective of re-connecting the District to the Anacostia River.

The Near Southeast Urban Design Framework reflects the process that steered its creation—a process that included inter-agency coordination, community involvement, and private sector interaction. It creates a unified framework that comprehensively links and coordinates specific private projects with phased investments in the public realm. This shift from individual projects to the making of a vibrant neighborhood addresses the systems that overlay the area at a larger scale, such as the network of trails, parks, pedestrian oriented streets and transportation facilities.



FIGURE 1.4
Illustrative Framework



FIGURE 1.5
View east from WASA to Navy Yard and USS Barry



FIGURE 1.6
Aerial view from Poplar Point



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The AWI Framework

For too long, the Anacostia River and its surrounding neighborhoods have been neglected:

- The river's water quality is severely polluted;
- Obsolete transportation infrastructure isolates neighborhoods from the river and separates them from waterfront parklands;
- Waterfront open space is underutilized and suffers from severe disinvestment;
- Neighborhoods along the river are some of the poorest and most underserved in the city.

On March 22, 2000, Mayor Anthony Williams brought together twenty federal and District agencies who own land or have jurisdiction along the Anacostia River to sign the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The AWI MOU creates a partnership to transform the Anacostia River from the city's forgotten river to a gem that could rival any urban waterfront in the United States or the world.

The vision of the AWI is of a clean and vibrant waterfront with parks, recreation uses and urban waterfront settings - places for people to meet, relax, encounter nature and experience the heritage of the waterfront neighborhoods. The AWI also seeks to ensure that the social and economic benefits derived from a revitalized waterfront are shared by those neighborhoods and people living along the Anacostia River for whom the river has been distant, out of reach and unusable.

To support the efforts of the AWI, the DC Office of Planning (OP) established a steering committee of the MOU agencies, an advisory group of community leaders and a collaborative team of consultants. Working with the District and federal partner agencies, the AWI Team has produced a Draft Framework Plan to guide the revitalization effort. This Framework Plan identifies five critical themes to guide the creation of a great waterfront along the Anacostia River.

These five themes are:

1. A Clean and Active River

The AWI charts the course for environmental healing and the rejuvenation of water-dependent activities on the Anacostia River. Pollution must be mitigated, run-off controlled, streams and wetlands restored and water activities promoted.

2. Eliminating Barriers and Gaining Access

The AWI reconsiders the design of transportation infrastructure in order to gain access to waterfront lands and better serve waterfront neighborhoods. The community must be able to get to the waterfront on beautiful streets and bridges that become gateways to the river's parks and amenities.

3. A Great Urban Riverfront Park System

The AWI creates a system of interconnected and continuous waterfront parks that will be linked by the Anacostia Riverwalk and Trail. The new park system will rival the great waterfront parks of the world and provide open space for adjoining neighborhoods, the city and the nation.

4. Cultural Destinations of Distinct Character

The AWI enhances and protects the distinct character of regional destinations along the waterfront. This will help create a vibrant waterfront that celebrates the cultural heritage of the river's neighborhoods, the city and the nation.

5. Building Strong Waterfront Neighborhoods

The AWI promotes sustainable economic development and re-connects the city to the river through new neighborhoods and the waterfront park system by creating opportunities to live, work and play along the river.



FIGURE 1.7
AWI MOU Boundary Map

AWI Principles	On Near Southeast
Clean and Active River	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extension of Riverwalk along the Anacostia• Best practices storm-water run-off and green building guidelines• Increase in green park space throughout site• New seawall bulkhead improvements• Improved "Boathouse Row"
Eliminating Barriers and Gaining Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pedestrian-friendly green corridors extending to river along New Jersey and Virginia Avenues• Fine-grained pedestrian street approaches throughout area to connect neighborhoods north of M Street to Anacostia River• Light rail "Starter Line" along M Street• Long term reconstruction of the highway infrastructure
Great Riverfront Park System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extension of Riverwalk along the Anacostia• Generous public park at the existing site of the Water and Sewer Authority and 4th Street along SEFC• Public park at southwest corner of Navy Yard• Public park gateway upstream of the Navy Yard by Maritime Plaza• New park on Canal Blocks site and recreational space at the Marine Barracks, adding to the neighborhood open space network
Cultural Destinations and Places of Distinct Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restored historic pump-house at New Jersey Ave. and waterfront• Grand Anacostia Park gateway at termination of Virginia Avenue• Large public park in SEFC site
Building Strong Waterfront Neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant increase of mixed-income residential density throughout entire project area• Increase in community-friendly retail to support residential and growing office communities in Near Southeast

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Historic Evolution of the Near Southeast

Historic Carrollsburg Neighborhood

When Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant first surveyed the nation's future capital city for George Washington, a number of waterfront settlements already existed. One of these was Carrollsburg, located in what was to become the Near Southeast quadrant of the new city. The Carrollsburg neighborhood has always been defined by its valuable shoreline along the Anacostia River, which is home to the nation's oldest continuously operating naval base, the Washington Navy Yard.

Washington Navy Yard

In 1799, the site for the Washington Navy Yard was approved by George Washington. The chosen location, two miles above the confluence of the Anacostia and the Potomac Rivers, was optimal for shielding the Navy's defenses from enemy ships. By the early 1800s, the Navy Yard had become one of the city's largest employers, spurring a heavy concentration of commercial and residential development in the surrounding area, including the construction of the Marine Barracks and the development of Uniontown across the river in present-day Anacostia, one of Washington's first suburbs. The surge of development accompanying the year-round employment created at the Navy Yard formed the neighborhood that is known as

Historic Anacostia. Development continued through the Civil War, when wartime prosperity and a booming population brought new investors in industry and expanded worker housing to the Southeast.

Urban Renewal

In the mid-1900s, as jobs became less plentiful at the Washington Navy Yard, working families in the Near Southeast moved into older, cheaper housing. As urban renewal altered the face of the Southwest in the 1960s, displaced lower-income families moved to the Near Southeast, occupying older housing and public low-income housing. Many of the neighborhood's middle class families moved to the suburbs, and the economic mix of Near Southeast residents tipped from middle class to low-income.

Rebirth of Near Southeast

Over the last 10 years, the Washington Navy Yard has grown substantially, and investment in Navy-related development in the Near Southeast has grown simultaneously. Private funds committed to development in the Near Southeast between 1990 and today total over one billion dollars, and though the majority of private development to date has been commercial, substantial HOPE VI funding is contributing to a reemergence of a residential neighborhood in the Near Southeast.



FIGURE 1.8
L'Enfant Plan as Modified by Ellicot, 1792

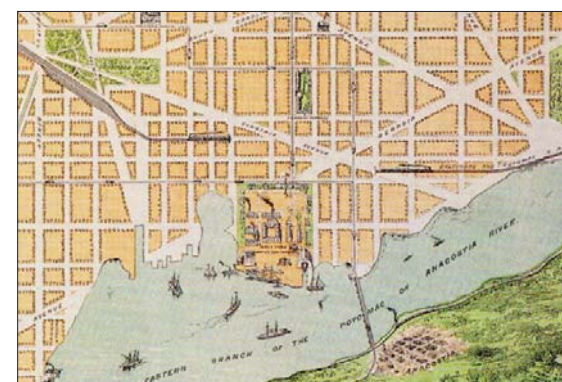


FIGURE 1.9
DuBois Map of Washington, 1892



FIGURE 1.10
Historic Photo of Arthur Capper Neighborhood



FIGURE 1.11
Historic Photo at 409 I Street



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Key Historical Framework Issues

Future development in the Near Southeast should preserve and complement the important historical structures and properties that provide reminders of the area's rich history, including many buildings in the Washington Navy Yard and Southeast Federal Center, the 8th Street historic district, the L'Enfant reservations, and the Washington, D.C. pumping station.

As a key employment-base since the 1800s, the Washington Navy Yard has played a major historical role in the development of the Near Southeast. Recent reinvestment in the Navy Yard has spurred hundreds of millions of dollars in investment in Navy-related office development. After the decline of middle-class residential neighborhoods in the Near Southeast in the mid-1900s, the only housing existing in the Near Southeast for the recent decades has been low-income. Plans for mixed-use development on the Southeast Federal Center site and throughout the Capper-Carrollsbury neighborhood should preserve the existing low-income housing and add thousands of units of additional housing, re-creating a series of residential neighborhoods in the Near Southeast.

Recapturing the Near Southeast Waterfront for Public Use

During the past five years, the Anacostia River has been the focus of increased District and Federal attention and funding, which has resulted in a gradual increase in public access to the waterfront in the Near Southeast. Reinvestment in the Washington Navy Yard has included continuous public access between the Navy Yard and the river, along the Anacostia Riverwalk waterfront trail.



FIGURE 1.12
Aerial view of Near Southeast looking west, c.1947



FIGURE 1.14
View of waterfront edge at Washington Navy Yard, c.1900



FIGURE 1.15
View west towards Southeast Federal Center, c.1977



FIGURE 1.13
Aerial view of Near Southeast looking east, c.1960

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Public Process

May 2000 Workshop: Understanding the Issues

The Near Southeast Urban Design Framework has its origins in a three day workshop convened in May 2000 by the District of Columbia and the U.S General Services Administration (GSA) to examine the area's future. Led by a team of design professionals assembled by the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU), over 200 residents participating concluded that the Near Southeast neighborhood should include a variety of uses which must be coordinated to take advantage of access to the District's most underutilized natural resource, the Anacostia River. The workshop participants recognized the potential for the Near Southeast to become a waterfront neighborhood with a rich mix of residential, public and commercial uses, and with a distinct sense of place related to its special waterfront location.

Key neighborhood concerns emerged quickly at the workshop. It was important for existing residents to establish that improvements to the area would not occur at their expense, and that their homes would not be displaced. Residents were concerned as to how the new development would affect the character of the existing neighborhood. Their concerns included the incorporation of historic structures into new developments, integration of the Southeast and the larger Capitol Hill community - in particular across the barrier created by the freeway, and the future of the waterfront. Access to and along the waterfront was also a fundamental issue, and the public discussed at length how different options for providing access and the size and character of proposed public spaces could best fit the needs of the community. The community participants also expressed great interest in improving the river's water quality and enhancing the natural environment.

In the course of the three-day public workshop, the challenges presented by these concerns ultimately shaped a vision that included a mixed-use waterfront neighborhood at the Southeast Federal Center, integrated with the improvement of existing housing in what later became the HOPE VI initiative, along with strong links along the river, M Street, and across the Southeast freeway.

Congress for the New Urbanism Report

In October 2000 the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) issued a report on the Near Southeast Neighborhood and Waterfront summarizing the findings of the May 2000 Workshop. The report was prepared for the District of Columbia Office of Planning and the U.S General Services Administration, for use as a foundation for re-envisioning the Near Southeast. The report described a vision that included creating a mixed-use neighborhood and extending the fabric of the L'Enfant street grid to the river, linking back to the Capitol and Capitol Hill. It proposed a long-range approach to the transformation of I-395 and the eventual re-establishment of Virginia Avenue, thus improving access to adjoining neighborhoods and to the waterfront. The report also proposed a number of implementation strategies and priority actions for achieving the desired mix of residential, retail, and office development in the Near Southeast.

Moving Forward: The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI)

The following year, in May of 2001, another community workshop was convened in the Near Southeast, a target area in the Mayor's Anacostia Waterfront Initiative. This workshop built on the CNU report from the previous year, and further developed the vision of a mixed-use waterfront neighborhood in the Near Southeast that developed into a shared set of principles for the area's future. These principles informed the planning efforts that followed, demonstrating the great value of a collaborative process between public agencies and the community.

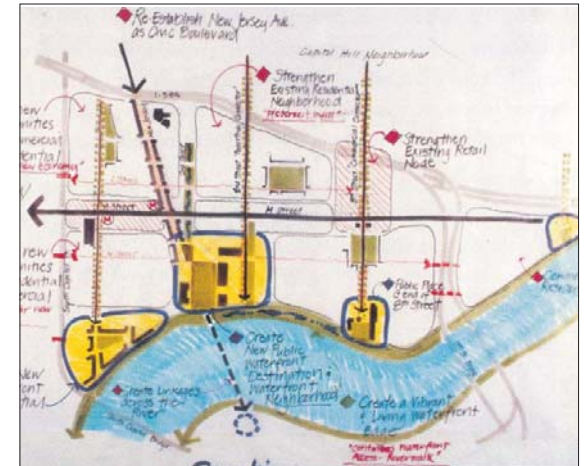


FIGURE 1.16
2000 CNU Workshop Sketch



FIGURE 1.17
2000 CNU Workshop Perspective Sketch